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Thank you Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, Representative Fleischman and Education Committee Members for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Association of School Nurses of Connecticut (ASNC) regarding:

HB 5446

AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES

ASNC **supports** Section 1 of HB 5446 related to increasing the number of professional development hours from 10 to 12 for school nurses during their first year of employment. Such professional development shall use curriculum approved by the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Association of School Nurses of Connecticut and the Connecticut Nurses' Association. While many newly hired school nurses have a tremendous amount of experience in the health care system, they may have no prior experience related to the area of school nursing. Professional development will provide new school nurses with knowledge of school health services, educational requirements in Special Education, Section 504 and various aspects of the specialized field of nursing in an educational environment.

Thank you for your support of this much needed professional development as recommended by the School Nurse Advisory Council (SNAC), a legislatively appointed Council during its fourth year in existence.

ASNC **opposes** Section 4 of HB 5446, which requires a dental screening performed by a dentist as part of a mandated physical examination prior to entry to school. ASNC notes that the requirement for a dental screening is more restrictive than HB 5213 since it eliminates a screening may be performed by a dental hygienist. This proposed bill could potentially create a barrier for children to enter school since many families do not have access, transportation, or the financial means to complete the oral screening requirement by a dentist.

ASNC acknowledges the importance of dental care for children but seeks to propose a model that is free and accessible to all children if they do not have dental insurance before making it a requirement to enter school.

ASNC urges you to delay action on this bill until a mechanism for dental care accessible to all families, is developed.

Respectfully submitted,
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President - Association of School Nurses of Connecticut

